

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

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DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR ADMR HUME, FAS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, JA
SUBJECT: CITRUS/FUNGICIDES

REF: (A) RIVERBEND CABLE OF APRIL 7; (B) TOFAS 232

1. SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE REPORTS ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE OPP ISSUE AND PRELIMINARY OUTLOOK FOR LABELING REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNGICIDES.

2. AGATT REPS TODAY MET WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WELFARE (MHW) OFFICIALS RE STATUS OF FOOD SANITATION INVESTIGATING COUNCIL'S (FSIC) REVIEW OF OPP. MHW INFORMED US THAT 1ST JOINT MEETING OF TOXICITY AND FOOD ADDITIVE SUB-COMMITTEES, WAS HELD ON MARCH 24. SECOND MEETING WAS ON APRIL 1.

3. WE ASKED IF WE COULD ASSUME FSCI RECOMMENDATION TO MHW MINISTER RE APPROVAL WOULD BE OUT BETWEEN MID-AND END APRIL. MHW RESPONDED THAT THAT WAS THEIR HOPE. REMINDED MHW THAT APRIL 1977 IS ALREADY SECOND ANNIVERSARY FOR THIS ISSUE AND THAT NEED FOR FUNGICIDE BECOMES EVEN STRONGER AS WARM WEATHER APPROACHES THEREFORE APPRECIATE SWIFT SMOOTH RESOLUTION. WE ALSO REMINDED MHW OF U.S. POSITION CALLING ALSO FOR EARLIEST POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF TBZ. NOTED THAT RESEARCH IN U.S. IS VIRTUALLY COMPLETED AND JAPAN STUDIES
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VERY CLOSE TO COMPLETION. MHW OFFICIALS PLEADED THAT THE OPP ISSUE ALONE HAD MADE THEM VERY TIRED INCLUDING MINISTER.

4. RE LABELING REQUIREMENTS, WE NOTED THAT SUBJECT WAS PREMATURE BUT ASKED FOR GRACE PERIOD SO U.S. PACKERS AND SHIPPERS WOULD HAVE TIME TO GEAR UP, ETC. MHW OFFICIALS

WERE RELUCTANT TO ADDRESS THIS SUBJECT BEFORE ACTUAL APPROVAL GRANTED AND ASKED THAT THEIR RESPONSES BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL. THEY ALSO STRESSED THAT THEY HADN'T DONE MUCH THINKING ON THIS UP TILL NOW, SO THEIR IDEAS SHOULD BE REGARDED AS PRELIMINARY. IN SUM, MHW HINTED THAT ENFORCEMENT OF LABELING REQUIREMENT FOR OPP WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THAT FOR DIPHENYL WHICH WAS APPROVED IN FEB. 1971. (I.E. LABEL WOULD INCLUDE IDENTIFICATION IN JAPANESE OF NAMES OF CHEMICALS, NAME OF PRODUCT, AND NAME OF IMPORTER AND WOULD BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT.) MHW NOTED THAT THE LABELING REQUIREMENT PER SE IS NOT REPEATED NOT REQUIRED BY LAW; RATHER IT IS EFFECTED UNDER GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN'S "ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE."

5. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN MARCH OF 1976 MHW EFFECTED A REGULATION (WHICH HAD DIRECT BEARING ON THE CITRUS WAX ISSUE OF EARLY 1976) WHICH IN PART REQUIRES FOOD IMPORTERS TO FILE A REPORT WITH MHW FOR EACH FOOD ITEM PROVIDING A COMPLETE LISTING OF PRESERVATIVES, CHEMICALS, ETC. CONTAINED THEREIN. THIS, WE NOTED, COMBINED WITH A LABELING REQUIREMENT ON THE FRUIT CARTONS, APPEARED TO BE A "DOUBLE" LABELING REQUIREMENT AND THUS INCONSISTENT WITH FREE TRADE PRINCIPLES. MHW OFFICIAL AGREED THAT IT COULD BE LOOKED UPON THAT WAY AND THAT FURTHER STUDY WOULD BE REQUIRED BEFORE FINAL DECISION. WE ALSO ASKED THAT IN EVENT THAT LABEL REQUIREMENT IS DEEMED NECESSARY (AS WAS FOR DIPHENYL) THAT REQUIREMENT NOT BE FOR SPECIFIC CHEMICAL FUNGICIDE (I.E. OPP OR TBZ) BUT BE UNCLASSIFIED

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A MORE GENERAL NOTATION SUCH AS "CONTAINS SYNTHETIC PRESERVATIVE," ETC. IN ADDITION, WE ASKED MHW TO MAKE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON OPP APPROVAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER DECISION IS MADE SO THAT 7-WEEK DELAY SUCH AS OCCURRED IN DIPHENYL CASE BETWEEN DATE OF FSIC RECOMMENDATION AND DATE OF OFFICIAL GOJ ANNOUNCEMENT COULD BE AVOIDED.

6. FINALLY, ASKED MHW TO KEEP US INFORMED INFORMALLY ON DETAILS OF LABELING REQUIREMENTS AS THEY DID TO SOME EXTENT WITH THE DIPHENYL CASE IN 1971. THEY AGREED TO COOPERATE ON CONFIDENTIAL BASIS WHERE POSSIBLE.
SHOESMITH

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